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In order to show how planning might be implemented and structured at the state education agency level, basic principles and guidelines regarding the establishment and operation of educational planning units are identified and related to the development of planning capabilities in state education agencies of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Following discussions of the need for comprehensive planning and the responsibility of the state education agency for educational planning, a functional description is presented of the planning process and its structure in state education agencies. Capabilities necessary for effective planning are identified, and illustrative state planning activities are presented in the appendix. Books concerning educational planning are included in a bibliography. (FS)

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Comprehensive Planning in State Educational Agencies

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING IN STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES

A Rationale and Discussion of the Planning Function and Structure within State Education Agencies

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WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Madison 1968

Participating States

ILLINOIS
INDIANA
MICHIGAN
MINNESOTA
OHIO
WISCONSIN

Preface

Representatives of the state education agencies of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin recognized the need for comprehensive planning capabilities at the state education agency level during 1968. Cooperatively a grant request was submitted to the Office of Education, and approved. Under provisions of Section 505, Title V, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, the Interstate Project for State Planning and Program Consolidation was established to study the need for planning capabilities and to engage in other related areas of mutual concern.

As one of a series of project activities, Dr. Richard Brooks of Drake University was authorized to conduct a study of the participating agencies for the purpose of identifying basic principles and guidelines regarding the establishment and operation of educational planning units, and to relate the principles and guidelines to the development of planning capabilities in state education agencies. This paper is the result of the study conducted by Dr. Brooks in cooperation with members of the six participating state agencies.

Thomas J. Stefonek
Interstate Project Director
December, 1968

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INTRODUCTION

Early in 1968, representatives from the state educational agencies of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin met to determine if it would be reasonable and profitable to share ideas concerning methods for developing comprehensive planning capabilities in each of their six agencies. With a grant from the United States Office of Education, such a project was undertaken.

This consultant was invited to take part in this project in May of 1968. His responsibility consisted of devising a model for comprehensive planning from which each of these six states might work.

All of the six states were visited during the months of May, June and July. On these visits, the consultant conferred with bureau and division heads, assistant or deputy superintendents and, usually, the chief state school officer of the particular state involved. The intent of these visits was to determine what ideas the individuals in these departments had concerning comprehensive planning, the readiness of the particular state agency for beginning a development of such capabilities, and the problems or difficulties foreseen in such attempts.

Certain basic similarities and differences were found throughout the six states. The similarities were notable in the following aspects:

1. Nearly all of the individuals interviewed consider educational planning to be highly important. Not only do they feel it is important at the present time, but they believe that such planning will become more and more important in succeeding years. The implication was that the development of comprehensive planning capabilities was going to be essential and, in many cases, the impression they left was that it is primarily a matter of *when* such capabilities would have to be developed.

2. All personnel with whom this consultant conferred indicated a strong commitment to the improvement of the educational enterprise in their respective states. This included not only the commitment for better programs at local school levels and at institutions of higher education, but also the desire to provide the most meaningful and helpful services to all relevant organizations by the state educational agency itself.

The similarities also extended in general to the types of problems faced by each state that might be appropriate for the planning process. In nearly all cases, such conditions as the press for preschool education, the extension of adult and vocational education programs, the inequality of resources available to local school agencies, and the equally inequitable special services available to young-

sters in different districts were cited as problems which require solutions and which might well be considered as planning problems, if such capabilities could be developed.

Of course, there were also differences between the various state agencies. Some of these were:

1. Size of the individual state agencies in terms of the number of professional personnel employed. This difference in the size tended to parallel reasonably closely the differences in the populations in the six states.

2. The methods by which the chief state school officers are selected. In some states the chief state school officer is elected on a partisan basis, while in other states the chief administrator is appointed either by the governor or by a state board of education.

3. The presence of a state board of education. The six states involved in this project include the only two states in this country which do not have state boards (Illinois and Wisconsin).

4. The readiness for developing planning capabilities. This difference was seen in the fact that two of the six states appeared to feel that the development of planning capabilities was being forced on them from outside. This feeling did not appear to be so much one of resentment or reluctance to recognize the need for planning, as it was that the individuals interviewed appeared to believe that their particular states may not yet be ready for this particular activity. In one case, for example, a central office administrator said that he felt that it would be imperative that the state office bring its staff employment up to a satisfactory level prior to the introduction of a planning function, since the department was at that time somewhat understaffed.

Interestingly enough, however, the apparent differences that existed in terms of the felt readiness for devloping planning capabilities appeared to be completely unrelated to the other differences which existed between these six state agencies. That is, there was no connection between size of agency, method of selecting the chief state school officer, or any other identifiable major difference that could be cited as concomitant with the readiness or lack of readiness for comprehensive planning development.

Probably the most significant difference found concerning the concepts of planning is that found within the individual state agencies rather than between them. The interviews with the various administrators in the state agencies indicated that those who were

responsible for divisions or bureaus within the agency felt that planning should be centered in the individual bureaus or divisions, while the central office administrators felt that the planning function was largely a tool for the top administrators and should thus be centrally located. It is understandable why this difference exists. It has been conceded by most authorities in the field of planning that it should be a centrally located function. At the same time, the individuals responsible for smaller portions of a state agency, not having been exposed at this point to a comprehensive planning structure or atmosphere, and being unaware of the relationships which must exist for the planning function to be successful, are necessarily wary and feel somewhat threatened by the possibility of having a centrally located group responsible for the planning operation.

This difference, although it is still very real and continues to contribute to a reluctance on the part of certain individuals in these state departments, was somewhat modified in the process of discussing what the planning function is, how it could be structured to promote educational improvement, and the fact that it would involve all aspects of a department or state educational agency.

The following paper is designed to show how planning might be implemented and structured in any of the six state educational agencies. It is understood that this is a model to be worked from, not toward. Each state must necessarily make its own modifications in both process and structure according to its policies, regulations, and statutory authority.

Each of the six states is commended on its cooperation in conducting this project. The consultant felt that everyone with whom he talked was most cooperative in expressing opinions, asking questions, providing forthright answers, and offering whatever help possible to his investigations. The six chief state school officers are also to be commended for their foresightedness in attempting to look to the future for their own state agencies and in recognizing the need for the development of planning capabilities.

Section I

THE NEED FOR COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

Planning as such is not a new activity for education in these United States. The establishment of the initial common school districts was a planned operation. In each of these districts, the board of trustees or board of directors was charged with planning sites, facilities and the employment of one or more teachers for instructional purposes. They were also charged with determining the amounts and sources of finances necessary to maintain these facilities and to pay the salaries of the teachers employed. Beyond this, however, there was little need for planning, and the planning thus carried out was essentially short range and immediate.

Although such limited planning activities were effective when such a relatively small proportion of the population was being educated in this country, it has been apparent throughout the 20th century that more adequate planning is needed. It has been only in the last few years, however, that a major press toward comprehensive planning has been felt. Although the reasons given here are in no sense intended to be exhaustive, the following are some of the reasons why the current push toward comprehensive planning has occurred.

First, not only the number of enrollees in the schools has increased, but the percentage of the population so enrolled has also increased. Elementary and secondary enrollments have increased dramatically during the 1950's and the 1960's, with accompanying dismay on the part of people in local school districts concerned with their ability to finance and maintain adequate educational systems. At the same time, institutions of higher education have been pressed with higher and higher enrollments which, in turn, require their continued asking of more and more funds to maintain an adequate educational program. The current interest in pre-school programs portends a possible new influx of enrollees.

It has also become evident that not all individuals or groups of individuals profit equally well from the same educational program. Consequently, it is becoming imperative to look at the objectives and end products toward which the school systems are working to determine the best possible way of allocating resources for programs to meet these objectives.

Second, the advances in educational technology and methodology have indicated a need for more adequate planning. Such in-

novations as nongradedness, flexible scheduling, programmed instruction, and computer-assisted instruction have raised a host of questions, as:

Which technologies and methods are appropriate for what pupils ?

When and how should the various technologies be implemented ?

What expenses for these technologies are warranted in terms of the educational benefits to be derived ?

Only through the implementation and evaluation of various types of programs and various technologies can answers to such questions as these be determined.

The third factor indicating a need for more appropriate planning is the vast increase in educational expenditures during the past few years and the expected increases during the next several years. While the actual expenditures for education in 1962 were approximately $31,000,000,000 ($31 billion), projections by Leonard Lecht, director, Center for Priority Analysis, National Planning Associates, Washington, D. C., indicate that expenditures by 1975 for education will be in excess of $60,000,000,000 ($60 billion).[1] Consequently, there is, and will probably continue to be, an increasing concern about the value received for the educational dollar spent.

Indicative of this concern is a statement by Jesse Unruh, Speaker of the California Assembly, when he said, "The politician of today, at least in my state, is unimpressed with continuing requests for more input without some concurrent idea of the school's output."[2]

The U. S. Office of Education also shows such concern when it insists that new programs funded under various titles of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act should have regular evaluations with objective measures to indicate how nearly the specified objectives are being met.

It is apparent from such statements and requirements that people at all levels, local, state, and national, are concerned that the educational output should be related to and indicative of the financial input.

Fourth, the use of systematic planning methods at the federal and state levels is another factor influencing educational planning. This can be seen in the use by the federal government of the Plan-

[1] Lecht, Leonard A., "Strategic Variables in Planning," in **Designing Education for the Future, No. 3,** (Eds.) E. L. Morphet and C. O. Ryan, Citation Press, New York, 1967, pp. 2-7.

[2] Nyquist, Ewald, "Emergent Functions and Operations of State Education Departments," in **The Emerging Role of Education Departments,** Center for Vocational and Technical Education, The Ohio State University, Columbus.

ning-Programming-Budgeting System, which was instituted as a requirement of various governmental agencies by President Johnson in 1965. Wayne McGown, director of the Bureau of Management of the Department of Administration in Wisconsin, indicated how this planning device might be useful to education when he said, "PPBS provides a bridge between two basic elements fundamental in a democratic society: legislative concern for the purse strings, and the necessity in a democracy for a free, yet responsive, system of education. PPBS is one way in which this conflict can be resolved."[3]

PPBS is only one system designed to provide cost benefit analyses. However, the development of these types of technologies indicates some potentially useful devices which could provide a basis for determining the effectiveness of the expenses of education.

Fifth and last, although by no means least important, is the complexity of society itself. With the rapidly advancing technology in business and industry, the shifting societal mores, and the shrinking of the world through communication and transportation advances, the educational systems must continually ask themselves what kinds of citizens they should be developing. The traditional pattern in our educational systems is probably inappropriate to people who will be the leaders fifteen, twenty, twenty-five or more years from now. Consequently, it is not reasonable that educational systems should fail to look at the future in order to be able to anticipate at least a better process through which the citizens of tomorrow might be educated.

Professor Donald Wells, at the Education Planning Conference, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa, October 17, 1967, stressed the need for planning in the following manner:

> Today we are trying to solve problems infinitely more complex than ever before. We are trying to understand the difficulties faced by emerging countries of which thirty years ago we had never even heard. We are struggling to deal with a deluge of facts, opinions, and other information from everywhere brought to us with a speed and in a volume that threatens to drown us all in words. We are trying to cope with a value system based on plenty rather than poverty, and an ethic increasingly oriented to leisure rather than work. And the change comes faster each year. It doesn't take an intensive amount of thought to realize that the demands we are making on our educational system are different than they were a few years ago; they are much

[3]McGown, Wayne F., "How to Apply Programming-Planning-Budgeting in Your State," National Conference of Legislators, Washington, D. C. (mimeographed paper).

> greater than they were a few years ago. Our choices are painfully obvious. We can let our educational system flounder trying to adjust to the changing and increasing demands made upon it, or we can try to look ahead, to determine where we want to go and some of what is needed to get there, and to set about getting it done.[4]

There is no attempt being made at this time to answer the question, "How can we afford to expend resources for planning?" The present view is that the most effective and efficient method for developing such capabilities must be found because we cannot afford *not* to plan.

4Quoted by Joseph Wolvek in **A Comprehensive Planning Process,** Iowa Department of Public Instruction, Des Moines, 1968 pp. 66-67.

Section II

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

In any discussion of planning, the questions always arise, "Who should plan ? And for what ?" Planning is not the prerogative of any agency or any level. Comprehensive planning, to be most effective, must be carried out at all levels: local, state, and national. The state educational agency, however, is in a unique position to provide leadership in and through planning, and it is to this topic that this section is addressed.

Planning is not new to state educational agencies. The fact that federal aid to education has typically been of the categorical type has necessitated state educational agency planning in the areas directly supported by these aids. This has been seen in the vocational education areas, vocational rehabilitation, various subject areas covered under NDEA, and, more recently, specific categorical areas served under ESEA. This last act has required more specific planning activities than did some of the earlier legislation. For example, in order to take part in Title V, the states had to submit relatively detailed comprehensive plans for the development of the state educational agency itself. Similarly, when the administration of Title III of ESEA was to be transferred to the states, specific plans for determining the use of these funds were also required.

It has become apparent, however, that piecemeal planning is not sufficient to meet today's needs in education. To be effective, planning must take into account all aspects of the educational system and the relationships between these various aspects. It is in this respect, particularly, that the state educational agency has significant responsibilities.

The question has been raised periodically of the importance of a strong state educational agency. Several reasons have been put forth which make such a strong agency imperative.

First, the federal government is becoming increasingly involved with the providing of funds for educational purposes in the states. It has attempted, and continues to attempt, to work through the state educational agencies, as much as possible, in the distribution, handling, and specifications for use of these funds. It has been seen in recent years that when the state agencies are incapable or unwilling to play a responsible part in the development of guidelines for using federal funds, as well as the distribution and auditing of such, the U. S. office will deal directly with local school districts in funding procedures.

The danger in this procedure lies in the fact that there are many school districts in these United States which do not have the resources necessary to develop projects and programs for utilization of such funds. Those districts which can develop such programs will necessarily develop programs designed to alleviate specific problems and difficulties as seen in their particular districts. Through such a procedure, certain basic problems found in many of the districts which are not able to take advantage of such programs may be avoided or not considered when these programs are developed. The state educational agency is in the best position to weigh the basic needs and problems of the entire state and to provide a method for assuring that the federal funds which are spent or allocated in a given program are utilized to the greatest benefit for all students within the state's boundaries.

Similarly, state educational agencies can help determine on what basis federal funds should be provided in order to meet the most pressing and urgent needs within a state. Thus, the guidelines for implementing federal programs, which are often influenced by pressures from local districts or other agencies, could best be served if the state agencies were strong and could provide the necessary information to the federal office for determining the types of programs and services which would be most helpful.

Education has been defined as being non-political. Certainly, to the extent that the best possible education can be offered to every eligible student, education is non-political. However, it does operate in and through the body politic in the general sense at all levels: local, state, and national. Education, to be most effective, must necessarily have the support of a variety of organizations, special interest groups, businesses, industries, and individuals in the community, state, and nation. To gain this support and cooperation it is necessary for the educational system to inform such individuals and groups of education's purposes and programs, its hopes and frustrations. The state educational agency should be in the best possible position to contact and inform the largest numbers and varieties of such individuals and organizations about the strengths, weaknesses, ideals, and aspirations of the state's educational system. By being located near the seat of state government, the state educational agency also has immediate access to many of the state offices or organizations which could prove to be most beneficial in the commitment of their support, whether such agencies are public or private, large or small, legal or extra-legal.

The accessibility of the governmental offices to the state's educational agency provides another reason for a strong state agency.

A large portion of the funds for education within a state is provided by state legislative act. For adequate financing of education, it is imperative that both the legislative and administrative branch of state government be intelligently informed on the needs, aspirations, and possibilities of education within the state. The state educational agency offers the greatest single organizational potential for providing the most meaningful and informative discussions of these types of issues with state governmental leaders. Where state agencies are not prepared to offer this type of information to other state governmental offices, the provision of information and appeals falls, by default, into the hands of diversified groups having generally less complete information, and often with particular special interests in mind for their legislative programs.

It is also evident that when a state educational agency has conducted planning activities for legislative programs based on the most comprehensive information possible, the cooperation of other agencies in supporting this legislative program is much more readily obtained.

The following are some of the specific reasons it is important for the state educational agency to be directly involved with comprehensive educational planning:

1. The responsibility for education is essentially a state responsibility. This is true not only through custom but also through law.

2. The function of the state educational agency has been going through a period of modification, particularly during the last five years. This modification is such that the agencies are assuming more responsibility for leadership and less responsibility for strictly supervisory and regulatory functions.

3. Education, particularly at the elementary and secondary levels, is suppported principally by funds collected and distributed within the state. Approximately 90 percent of the costs of education in a state are from funds collected and distributed within its borders. Usually, about half of these funds are distributed as state aids; thus, the state agency has a responsibility in determining that these resources are used for the best possible results in its educational institutions.

4. The advent of planning in other governmental agencies provides an opportunity for the state educational agency to work closely with other state, regional, and national offices, in the areas of health and welfare, particularly, to provide direction and assistance toward adequate utilization of resources that would be impractical or impossible for local educational agencies

or even national agencies to provide on an equally effective basis.

5. E. B. Nyquist has stated very effectively why state educational planning is imperative:

> The state provides a broader base for educational leadership and planning than is possible at the local level, yet one which is far closer to the local school . . . than the federal government. It makes possible a continuity of leadership and breadth of perspective directly responsive to regional variations, conditions and needs. The state is uniquely equipped to provide leadership, formulate policies, make decisions . . . and take action on a scale not so limited as to be fragmentary, transient, and localized—nor so vast as to be remote, impersonal and conducive to the development of a bland, monolithic conformity.[5]

Finally, the state educational agency is an arm of state government. It has the ultimate responsibility for the quality and types of programs to be offered to the students in the state. Its location in the educational structure is such that it can provide interfacing between local educational agencies and the federal educational agencies. In the one case, it can interpret needs, priorities, and expectations from the local and state levels to the national level, and in the other case, it can interpret the intent and usefulness of the federal programs to the local agencies. In both cases, comprehensive planning would add immeasurably to the quality and meaningfulness of the interpretations and provide within each state a type of leadership which is so desperately needed.

There is now an interdependence in education between all levels: local, state, regional, and national. This interdependence is growing rather than diminishing. Nyquist has also pointed out that the state agency must perform two functions relative to this interdependence. The first of these is to secure a balance of strength among the various levels so that there is a legitimately shared responsibility of a partnership nature. Secondly, he feels that it is a responsibility of the state to maintain a "diversity in local education in face of pressures fostering growing conformity and nationalization of the schools."[6]

In light of the above statement, another situation which has been very evident in education in recent years must be kept in mind. Whenever a problem cannot be solved locally, the next higher ad-

[5]Nyquist, E. B., "State Organization and Responsibilities for Education," in **Emerging Designs for Educaton,** Project Office: 1362 Lincoln Street, Denver, 1968, p. 146.

[6]Ibid.

ministrative level is looked to for solution. Generally, this has been the state educational agency. If this level cannot or will not provide adequate possibilities for solutions to problems, the next higher level in the structure is sought for such solutions. This, generally, has meant that local agencies would turn to the federal government for solutions to local problems. The danger here is that in seeking solutions to local problems in one area, the U. S. Office or the federal legislators must necessarily anticipate some commonality in the problems in all areas of the country whether such commonality exists or not. The state cannot afford to permit problems which it faces to be dealt with on a national level where the very nature of the problems to be solved may necessarily be watered down or misinterpreted in trying to provide such solutions on a nationwide basis. This would not only mean the state office would lose the direct involvement in the solutions of state problems but would be abdicating the responsibility which it has for seeking such solutions.

Comprehensive planning led by a state educational agency can also provide a very sound basis on which to recommend specific legislative programs to the state's elected officials. State legislatures generally have been found to react much more favorably to requests for funds when it can be shown how the funds are going to be used, for what purposes, and with what anticipated results, than when such requests are made on a non-defined, "I wish," basis.

Section III

A FUNCTIONAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING PROCESS AND ITS STRUCTURE IN STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES

Three assumptions are necessary to a description of the planning process. These are:

1. Planning is a process, not a product. The re-cycling of the planning operation, the up-dating of information, and the modification of programs are integral aspects of the planning function. Since comprehensive planning is a process rather than the development of a product, it should be readily apparent that there is no end point. To state that it would sometime be finished would mean that educational problems would all be solved and the best possible programs would be in operation. Such is not likely to be the case any time in the near future. So long as new information concerning the teaching-learning situation is provided, new technologies are developed, and resources are not static, the need for educational planning will continue. In fact, since education deals with people, and people are not static entities, it is highly unlikely that such a situation will exist at *any* time in the future.

2. Comprehensive planning is not synonymous with a comprehensive plan. Comprehensive planning refers to the nature of the planning activity. It implies that, for any problem or interest area significant enough to be subjected to comprehensive planning, the involvement of interested groups and individuals and the information which is entered into the planning process will be as comprehensive as possible. The term "planning" implies that there will be a method for utilization of available resources and for the handling of data such that various alternative solutions or courses of action can be investigated, with their relative merits and disadvantages identified in the most expedient manner.

3. The strongest impetus to effective educational planning by a state educational agency is the commitment of the chief state school officer to planning as an essential function. In response to a question asked by this consultant in the six state agencies concerning what would be the most significant contribution to making a planning operation successful, the most frequent response was "The Chief's backing." It was felt that with

this support, it would be possible for the necessary resources to be committed to make planning effective.

What, then, should comprehensive planning accomplish ? These accomplishments have been stated by A. A. Buchmiller, as follows:

1. Analysis of information to assist in defining priorities and emergent needs.

2. Development of initial strategies to meet needs, to analyze alternatives, and to assist in planning new programs to meet such needs.

3. Assist administrators of existing programs to gather information, evaluate existing programs, and develop modifications of such programs to more effectively achieve goals.

4. Measure progress and supply information to administrators in order that adjustments can be made in program direction which enhance achievement of goals.[7]

It can be seen by this definition of responsibilities that the planning process is not a solution to problems, but is rather a process to provide the most valuable information and interpretations on which to make decisions relative to establishment of goals, means for achieving goals, and evaluation of the effectiveness of these goal-oriented activities.

There has been an apprehension expressed that planning involves another administrative level imposed upon an already existing structure. Planning is not administration as such. Although administrators use planning in decision-making, the value of a planning process goes far beyond this group. It is beneficial for all areas of a state education agency in defining priorities, establishing objectives, identifying reasonable courses of action with the most efficient utilization of resources, and establishing means for evaluating the effectiveness of action taken.

It is also advantageous to all areas of the state and to all people therein. For local communities, it can help determine the needs which are most pressing, indicate appropriate courses of action, and specify procedures for evaluating the effects of these courses of action. For the legislature, it can provide a much more meaningful legislative program based on established needs and requirements for meeting these needs, including the necessary resources based on the most complete and accurate information available.

The following portions of this report indicate the essential planning processes and some of the considerations which must be made

[7] An unpublished paper by A. A. Buchmiller, **"A Strategy for the Development of Comprehensive Planning Capability in the Department of Public Instruction,"** Madison, Feb. 1968.

if such processes are to be effective. Initially, the three major aspects of planning — establishment of goals, determination of possible courses of action, and evaluation—will be considered.

The Establishment of Goals and Priorities

A first consideration for comprehensive planning in a state educational agency should be the determination of worthwhile goals for the state's educational enterprise. The definition of areas in which goals are to be established is itself an administrative decision. In research, a problem area is defined as a situation or condition about which one feels uncomfortable, dissatisfied, or questioning. The same relationship exists here. When it is felt that a situation or condition is not what it should be, or that it might be improved, this provides a basis for investigation and the determination of suitable goals.

Goal establishment involves answering two questions. These are, first, "What is now?" and, second, "What might be?" To establish what exists, it is necessary to utilize information. This information (or data) must meet two criteria. It must be both adequate and accurate.

Adequacy implies that all useful data pertinent to a given problem are available. A planning group may find that some information relative to certain problem areas is lacking, and that what information does exist is incomplete. In such cases it may be necessary to collect more data or to work with the data-collecting group in the agency to determine the most appropriate ways in which this information might be obtained.

Accuracy is self explanatory. Unless the information can be depended upon to be accurate, a situation cannot be defined.

Priorities enter in two fashions. First, it is a matter of priority as to which areas are assigned to the planning process, and in what order. It would be virtually impossible, at least initially, to be able to work in all areas of the educational enterprise at the same time. Thus, areas are assigned on a priority basis.

Secondly, the priorities are a factor in determining toward which goals the agency should direct its efforts and, again, in what order. It is important that these priorities be based on such aspects as:

a. The probability of success in attaining defined goals, and
b. The visibility of the goal attainments.

No organization is capable of working toward all its goals with equal vigor at the same time. Since formal planning is a relatively new activity in state educational agencies, it is very important that initial planning efforts result in successful attainment of the goals which have been specified. Consequently, the determination of the goals toward which to work initially will need to be based on the

availability of resources which would be likely to result in success. Likewise, it is important that legislators, other state agencies, and the general public be aware that specific goals are met. Thus, high priority must be given to meeting goals which are visible to these groups and others.

Development of Courses of Action to Meet Established Goals

Seldom is there but one way to meet an educational objective. Consequently, a major task of the planning process is to determine possible ways of reaching stated objectives or goals. For any course of action devised, three particular aspects must accompany it. These are:

1. An anticipated time schedule indicating the degree to which the goals or objective should be met by that particular course of action at given points in the schedule.
2. The over-all benefits or attainment which should be expected if the particular course is followed.
3. The total cost in terms of all necessary resources which would have to be committed in order for the course of action to be effective in meeting the stated goals.

When the possible courses of action have been defined, it should be the responsibility of those engaged in the planning to describe them together with the relative advantages and disadvantages of each. Based on the alternatives which have been identified and their respective merits, it would be possible, and is suggested, that a specific course of action be recommended to the administration.

Evaluation

Any plan of action which is implemented must incorporate a means for regularly evaluating its progress toward goal attainment. This evaluation should be based on the time schedule outlined in the plan of action and the attainment of specific sub-goals or objectives incorporated in this time schedule. It should not be assumed that simply because a course of action is implemented it will necessarily result in each desired outcome at each point. Unforeseen circumstances, as well as pertinent variables of which the planning group was unaware, can result in marked differences between desired and actual outcomes. The results of the evaluations should be carefully reviewed to determine whether the activities should be continued, discontinued, or revised.

Other Considerations

The planning process is not limited to current needs or problems. Many of those aspects of education which might be submitted to the planning procedure may not *at this time* even be considered as problems or be known to exist as needs. For example, that aspect of edu-

cation which is particularly concerned with promoting or extending the educational opportunities of the disadvantaged was not a seriously considered situation in education a generation ago. However, today it is one of prime importance and receives an immense amount of attention.

Nor is it necessary that the identification of needs should arise within the state educational agency itself. As needs emerge, it is very possible that the recognition of the need may arise in the community or in organizations outside the state agency. For example, one of the emergent needs currently recognized, but not dealt with, is the possibility of providing the education of the pre-school child at public expense, in a public school setting. An outline of what might occur in this case illustrates the planning procedure.

First, the need for some investigation of this area might be brought to the attention of the state educational agency from one or more of several sources. These could include: organizations of concerned parents of pre-school youngsters; local educational agency personnel, under pressure from parents or other groups in the community to establish such classes; the U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; the State Department of Social Welfare; the Office of Economic Opportunity; church or service organizations; or any of several other civic, service, or educational organizations which feel that this is a problem that should be considered by the state educational agency or other educational agencies. Of course, such a concern might also arise in the state educational agency itself.

If it is deemed a reasonable area for investigation, the chief executive of the state educational agency should indicate this to the group in charge of coordinating the planning function. Initially, the planners would have to consider two aspects—first, determine some of the tentative questions that need to be answered relative to pre-school education, and second, identify groups and organizations which should be asked to become involved in the planning process.

Some of the questions which might need to be answered would include the following:

Is pre-school education feasible, and if it is, is it feasible in the near future ?

Should pre-school education be a public or a private operation ? If private, should state funds be committed to its support ?

How should pre-school education be funded if it is a public obligation ?

At what age should pre-school education be started ?

What is the population to be served in terms of numbers?

What facilities for such a program currently exist, and what would need to be constructed ? What type of facilities would be needed for such a program ?

What constitutes a pre-school curriculum ?

What modifications in current school programs would need to be made in order for articulation to be adequate between the pre-school program and the regular school program ?

Types of groups which might be asked to become involved in the planning process, either in supplying information or in direct participation, might include the following:

The Office of Economic Opportunity

Chairmen or ranking members of each of the education committees of the legislature.

Board of Social Welfare

State Executive Officers

State Department of Health

State Department of Social Welfare

State Medical Society

Ministerial Association

Press and News Services

State Association of Child Guidance Centers

State Association for Mental Health

State Taxpayers Association

Service Clubs

Association of Colleges and Universities

State Association of School Administrators

State Congress of Parents and Teachers

Elementary Principals Association

Educational Association

Representatives of schools, both public and private

Members of the State Educational Agency

Although not all of the above would necessarily become involved in the planning process, nor necessarily even wish to become involved, they should certainly be kept advised of the process and of the progress being made. There is no doubt, however, that plans and courses of action are better accepted and more readily implemented if those most directly affected by the outcomes of such programs are involved in their development.

It can be seen that a comprehensive planning operation for such a question would involve quite an extensive commitment of manpower, data processing, time, and money. However, at the end of such

a thorough study, it would be possible to recommend to the chief state school officer a suggested course of action based on the best and most recently available information concerning pre-school education that could be obtained. On this basis, the state educational agency could make its recommendations to the legislature concerning the feasibility of such an educational program, and if feasible, whether it would be best to try out several types of pre-school education as pilot projects, the necessary requirements for finances, personnel, materials, ages to be served, etc. At the same time, the relative advantages and disadvantages of various alternatives concerning such an educational program would have been investigated and would be included in the recommendations.

Also built into a planning process of this type would be the objectives of such an educational program and some suggested means for evaluating how well objectives were met once such programs were established. Thus, the planning process does not end with the recommendation of a course of action. The course of action itself, if implemented, must be evaluated in terms of the desired outcomes.

It should be apparent that the planning process as a function is not divorced from the rest of the state educational agency, but is a part of it. In planning for a program such as described above, it would necessarily be important that people from the state agency would be involved, such as those concerned with early childhood education, curriculum, facilities, finances, and administration. It should also be evident that, with the amount and types of information which would necessarily need to be collected and processed, the data processing portion of the agency would also be extensively utilized. The benefits to the people in the agency would be in a broader concept of this area than they had experienced previously, and in the definition of the types of responsibilities which the state educational agency would have in the event that such programs were implemented.

Nothing has been said concerning the specific nature of the planning unit itself in a state educational agency. The description presented on the previous pages indicates that the nature of such a planning unit is one of a coordinating group. Consequently, the most appropriate title for such a group would be a *planning coordination unit*.

The planners on any educational problem submitted to the comprehensive planning process are those individuals from the state educational agency, other organizations, individuals, and representatives from groups which are particularly concerned about the problem being investigated. The function of a planning unit is to coordi-

nate the activities of these planners in such a way as to provide for effectiveness and efficiency in arriving at solution information relative to the given problem.

The major functions, then, of the planning coordination unit are:

1. Define and delimit the nature of the problem to be investigated.
2. Secure and maintain the cooperation of appropriate groups, organizations, and agencies in the planning process.
3. Coordinate the activities of the individuals engaged in the planning process.
4. Keep the planning process moving.
5. Maintain documentation of activities, supervise or produce the final report relative to the given problem, including the recommendations for action, and delineate specific recommendations for evaluating the procedures to be followed.
6. Coordinate the evaluation procedures to be followed in determining effectiveness of implemented courses of action.

This concept of a planning coordination unit removes from the members the stigma of being considered as "the planners," and instead, puts on this group the burden for providing methods for planning which will produce useful and informative solutions to educational problems while involving, as much as possible, those groups which will be directly affected by the courses of action to be devised.

Comprehensive planning must be supportive of planning at all levels in the state. The members of planning units cannot be expected to be immediately aware of all educational problems, but they can provide a model for problem solution which is appropriate at any level. Thus it will be essential for those in the planning units to provide some assistance and training for other state agency personnel. Only then will it be possible for the personnel to utilize this approach in their own areas of interest and to support through appropriate input the comprehensive planning activities in which the state agency engages.

Similarly, local educational agencies need help in planning. However, it would be impractical, and probably impossible, for each local educational agency to provide a unit for comprehensive planning for the individual district. Thus, the development of planning capabilities, in the planning unit of the state agency and in all professional personnel in that agency, would be a method which could provide some very useful and much needed planning assistance to local educational agencies.

The location of such a planning coordination unit in the state educational agency is very important. If the unit is to provide the

type of coordination indicated here, it will be important for it to have status and freedom from operational responsibilities. The planning unit should hold a staff position in the state educational agency so that it is removed from direct responsibilities for the operation of any specific program. Also, it should be in a position of responsibility to either the chief state school officer or one of his assistants. This would give it the status essential for the type of coordination the unit is expected to provide in the planning process.

The recommended relationship is shown in Figure 1. The implication in this diagram is that the planning unit is directly responsible to an individual in the central administration; this might be an assistant or deputy superintendent, or the chief state school officer himself. The unit has indirect responsibility to program administrators in that information concerning the planning process must necessarily be made available to all of those areas in the agency which would be affected by the courses of action being outlined. Internal services, which would include data processing, have an indirect responsibility to the planning unit while being primarily responsible to ongoing programs.

Figure 2 indicates the major activities in the planning process for which the planning coordination unit should be responsible. The skills necessary to meet these responsibilities are described on pages 23 and 24 of this report.

Another aspect which needs to be considered is that of control. Not every educational problem would necessarily need to be submitted to the planning process. Whether a given problem is so submitted is the decision of the chief state school officer. This is important for two reasons:

1. It provides for consistency in terms of priorities. The determination of what most needs this type of processing and the relative importance of various types of problems is, essentially, an administrative decision. To attempt to adequately distribute time and effort on the part of any planning group when problems are being submitted from all levels of a state agency, as well as from outside the agency, could well lead to some unreasonable demands being placed upon the coordinating unit and, at the same time, could result in unnecessary conflicts.

2. The stipulation that a topic or problem requires the planning process gives status to this particular planning operation when it is endorsed by the chief state school officer. The submission of a problem to the planning process, by implication, also commits the necessary agency resources to the planning operation in order to invesitgate it and determine appropriate courses

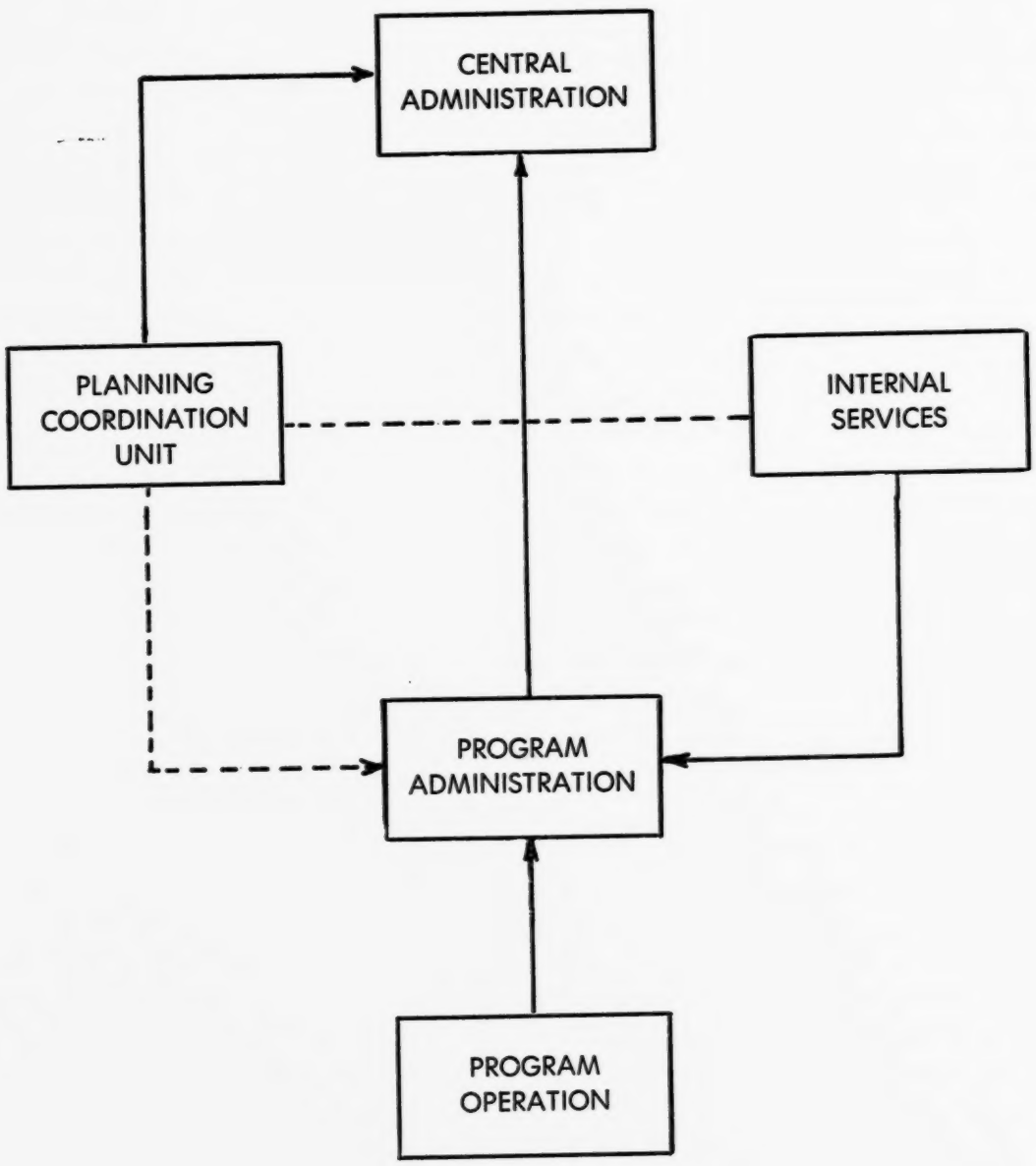

Figure 1

Proposed Structural Location of the Planning Coordination Unit

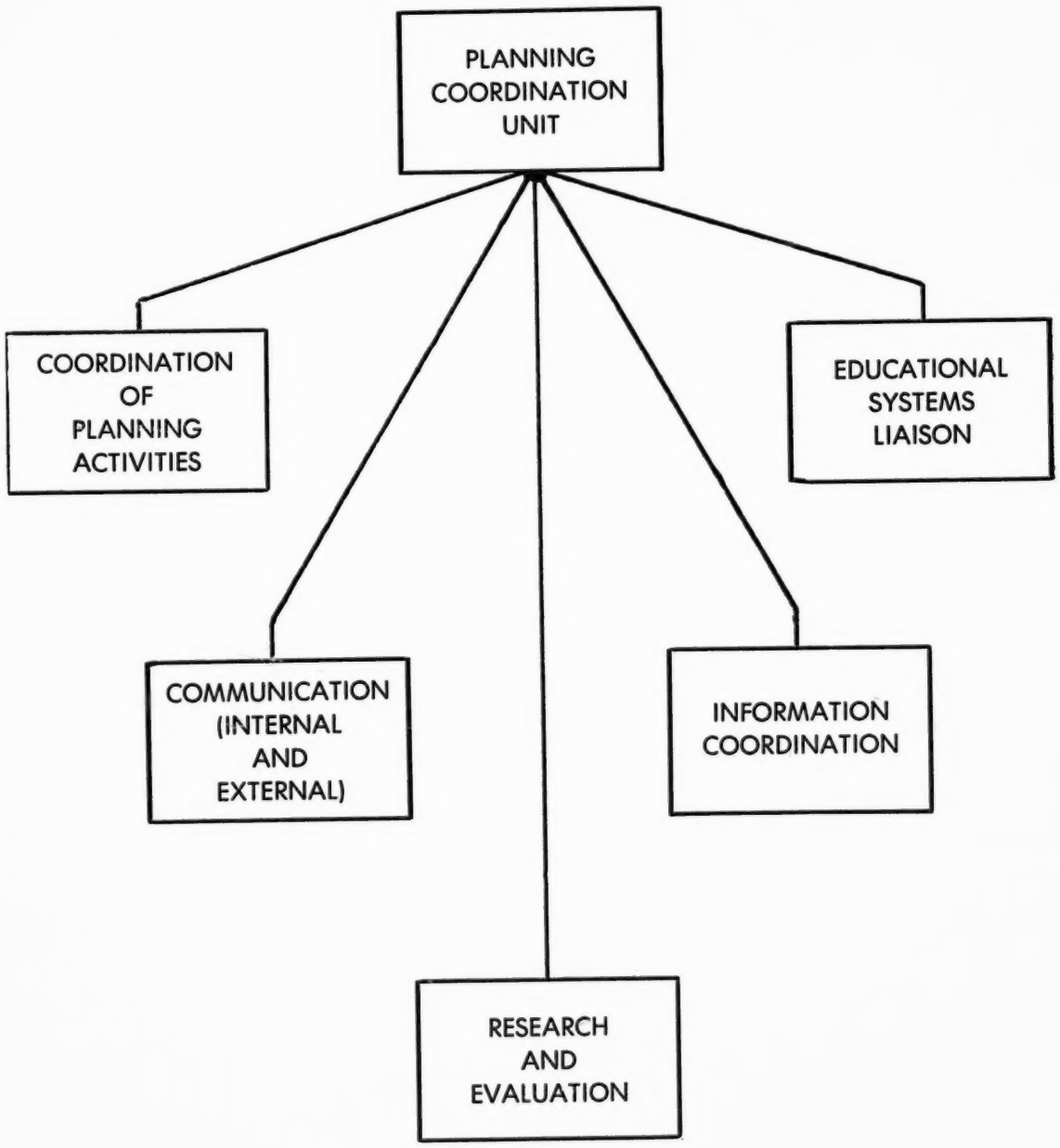

Figure 2

Responsibilities of Planning Coordination Unit

of action. This would not necessarily be the case if the problems were to be submitted by other individuals or groups within the agency or outside of it.

A word of caution is imperative at this point. Comprehensive planning is too important to be relegated to a secondary responsibility level. That is, those individuals who are designated as members of a planning coordination unit should not be expected to also function in the day-to-day operational aspects of the state agency. To assume that operational activities and planning coordination could both be effectively handled by such a group is unrealistic. Typically, the day-to-day operations in an agency would take precedence over a planning function to the extent that it would be very likely that effective comprehensive planning would never get started.

Any model has certain strengths and weaknesses. In the present case, the following might be considered the weaknesses of this particular model:

1. As described here, the evaluation of the courses of action which are implemented rests with the planning group. To prevent the possibility of "automatic success" of any course of action chosen, the state agency administrators may wish to place the responsibility for evaluation with another group. Such a group may either be a part of the state educational agency or an outside agency contracted to provide this service.

2. The involvement of individuals representing groups, organizations, or agencies in the planning process may at times result in a relatively large and somewhat unwieldy group of participants. This will require some deft handling of the planning process so that it does not bog down of its own weight. It may well be that an entire planning group would never meet together at one time. That is, the activities may need to be split into tasks and assigned to sub-groups with representatives of these sub-groups meeting for purposes of coordination and direction.

The model described here has the following strengths:

1. The staff position for the planning coordination unit, and responsibility to central administration, should provide the status necessary for the members of such a unit to be able to work with all areas of the state educational agency. This status should also help in gaining the cooperation of other interested groups in the planning process.

2. The widespread involvement of groups and organizations in the planning process should give a great deal of strength to

the results of such planning. The strength will be seen in terms of the diversity of ideas as well as in the more general acceptance of the results of such planning. People are generally more willing to support and work for a plan if they have had a part in devising it.

The described structure and operation of a comprehensive planning process has far more advantages than disadvantages for state educational agencies. The disadvantages cited can be overcome without weakening the advantages of this particular plan.

Section IV

CAPABILITIES NECESSARY FOR EFFECTIVE PLANNING

Information is the foundation upon which planning rests. To support adequate planning, a system must provide, relative to any stated problem, information which is comprehensive, accurate, and current.

Each of the six states is presently collecting, processing and reporting on relatively extensive amounts of educational information in its respective state. Some rather marked differences occur in terms of:

a. The specific informational items which are collected.

b. The extent to which information is handled by electronic data processing.

c. The sophistication of the data processing equipment utilized.

d. The location of the data processing center (some state educational agencies have their own data processing equipment while others use a centralized state office data processing system).

e. The number and types of reports that are generated from the information which is collected by the state agency.

Each of the six states is a participating member of the Midwestern States Educational Information Project. This project has developed an integrated information system which is available for implementation, in whole or in part, to each of the participating states. One of the activities of that project was the review of the present informational systems in each state. The results of this survey and the possible implementation of the information system should provide a supporting base for the implementation of the planning function in each of these six states.

Planning is a process, but this process must be conducted and coordinated by people with particular competencies. The following are the types of skills which would be necessary in carrying out the planning process in state educational agencies.

1. Administration. Since the planning process involves many types of individuals working together, administrative skill will be necessary to keep the process moving in the desired directions.

2. Communication. This skill is particularly essential in gaining the cooperation of groups and individuals necessary for the planning function to be most effective. It is also necessary

in order to keep various individuals and groups, both within and outside the state educational agencies, informed of the planning activities.

3. Research. This type of skill is necessary for designing approaches to the solution of problems, structuring of models for testing, and the designing of procedures for evaluating the outcomes of specific courses of action.

4. Information Systems. As stated previously, information forms the basis for effective planning. Information systems skills will be necessary for work with data processing personnel in devising appropriate collection documents, effective and efficient procedures for handling relevant information, and the design of formats for retrieving the appropriate data.

5. Educational Systems. Throughout the planning process, it will be imperative that the people engaged in planning be aware of the nature of the educational systems in which implementation would necessarily occur and the possibilities and limitations of these systems. To devise courses of action which, by the nature of the educational systems in which they would be implemented, are doomed to failure because of impractical considerations, would be an unjustifiable waste. This can readily be avoided through the supplying of relevant information throughout the planning process concerning the educational systems of the state.

The skills cited above are not mutually exclusive. It is possible that more than one such skill may be found in an individual. Another possibility is that certain skills may be made available to the planning process on an intermittent or irregular basis. The size of the planning coordination unit must necessarily be left to the individual state educational agency to determine relative to its resources and availability of personnel.

Many persons will work with the planning unit on a part time or intermediate basis, according to the type and nature of the problems which are being considered. As indicated previously, these will include employees from various divisions of the state agency, representatives of other state agencies, local schools, lay groups, colleges and universities, and special consultants who could offer specific, needed services. Such interaction would not only permit the effective functioning of the planning processes but would also provide the kind of cooperation necessary to implement courses of action when they have been recommended by the planning unit and approved by the appropriate decision makers.

Assigning individuals to form a planning coordination unit does

not guarantee that effective planning will occur. Planning is a technical process and requires the use of effective technologies. Consequently, the unit must be permitted the opportunity to become acquainted with appropriate planning technologies prior to the effective uiliza-tion of its skills.

Several planning technologies have been developed during the last few years which might be utilized directly or adapted for state educational agency planning functions. Some of the technologies which have been developed and which have been, or could be, adapted for use with educational agencies are: CPM (Critical Path Method), PERT (Program Evaluation and Review Technique), PPBS (Planning-Programming-Budgeting System), Manpower Assessment and Systems Analysis. Any of these techniques can be applied in education to supply information needed to make decisions as well as to analyze the relationships of variables which pertain to the outcome of the decisions made.

Any state educational agency could use any of the planning techniques cited, or others which might become available, or it could develop its own methodology. No matter which technology is chosen by a state educational agency, the difficulties associated with developing the required skills in implementing the technology should not be underestimated. Once the particular techniques to be utilized have been determined, the first requirement should be to gain the skills necessary to utilize the specified technology or technologies.

Since the effective use of any planning technique requires the involvement of the entire agency, an in-service training program should be considered for *all* professional and para-professional members of the state educational agency in the particular planning techniques which will be implemented. A small group in the agency might be provided the necessary training and it, in turn, could conduct the in-service program for other personnel. Or the agency might arrange for experts in this particular technology to provide the in-service training required for the entire staff. Although the implementation of such a technique requires a rigorous discipline and a strong commitment on the part of the state educational agency, the ever-increasing accountability of educators for their use of resources in the growth industry of education warrants such a commitment and expenditure.

It would also be wise in the in-service training aspects of this planning technology to invite selected representatives of local school districts to be participants. The selections should be based on two criteria:

1. To what degree would such a technique be beneficial to the district being represented ?

2. To what extent might the person being selected be counted on to contribute to the planning process ?

One author has stated:

> In-service training in planning within the SEA is in itself a planning technique utilized by a planning unit and oriented to: efficiency of agency operations, establishing SEA in-house communications networks based upon similar language and concepts, and reducing the over-all number of problems directed to the planning unit, allowing it to concentrate upon complex priority problems. The need for in-service training and planning within the SEA should be considered as an on-going activity and should be a major segment of the SEA orientation program for new professional staff members.[8]

In summary, planning capabilities required in a state educational agency include an adequate information system, the employment and/or assignment of a small group of individuals with particular competencies to coordinate the planning function, and the development of planning capabilities through the state educational agency organization.

[8]Wolvek, J., op cit., 60.

APPENDIX

ILLUSTRATIVE STATE PLANNING ACTIVITIES

Representatives of the six state educational agencies involved in this project expressed an interest in identifying the types of planning activities in which state agencies throughout the country were engaged. Consequently, the project director sent requests to all state educational agencies asking for short descriptions of activities either being conducted or recently completed which might be considered planning.

Responses were received from 29 state agencies (58%). Of these, 26 (or 90% of the respondents) identified activities which they were currently, or had been recently, conducting. The number of such activities described ranged from one in some states to more than ten in certain others.

The returns were greater in number than could be conveniently used for illustrative purposes in this Appendix. Consequently, a selection has been made from the reports using the following three criteria:

1. No more than one activity from any given state should be reported.

2. Those selected should be reasonably representative of the types of activities identified.

3. The states whose activities are reported should represent various sections of the country.

Table 1 contains the results of the selection process indicated above. Not all of the information submitted on any of these activities is included in the table. The information presented here was chosen to illustrate the following four points:

1. The types of problems which might be submitted to the planning process are extremely varied. No two of the activities cited are alike, nor do these include all of the types of activities which were mentioned in the returns.

2. Not all the planning activities in which the state agency becomes involved or takes the lead necessarily arise initially in the state agency itself. As seen in these examples, identification of problems may occur in the state educational agency, in local educational agencies, in the legislature, or possibly in any of a number of other places. The important aspect is that the state agency is in communication with the other agencies, groups, and persons, and thus in a position to become aware of the current or

emerging needs no matter where such identification occurs initially.

3. An indication of the comprehensiveness of the planning activity can be seen in the extent and diversification of the involvement of other agencies and groups. As seen in the fourth column of the table, comprehensiveness ranges from very extensive (where various educational agencies, non-educational agencies, lay personnel, and interested groups were brought into the planning process) to instances where the planning was essentially conducted by the state educational agency personnel alone. Between these extremes are those in which a degree of comprehensiveness is obtained by bringing in special groups or other educational agencies.

4. Comprehensive educational planning does not require that the state educational agency always maintain control of the planning activity. The final column in Table 1 shows that involvement in such planning can occur when control rests with the state agency itself or with other agencies, such as a legislative group or local educational agencies.

Table 1

STATE	TYPE OF ACTIVITY	SOURCE WHERE PROBLEM WAS IDENTIFIED	GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED	LOCATION OF CONTROL
ALABAMA	Legislatively established commission to determine methods for improving public education	State educational agency, state legislature	State educational agency, local educational agency, legislators, higher education institutions, lay people	State legislature
ARIZONA	An 8-state project designed to predict change and plan for improving education in the future	State educational agencies	Educational organizations at all levels, laymen, outside consultants and representatives	The state educational agency in each state
CALIFORNIA	To develop a state plan to utilize the Educational Professions Development Act	State educational agency	State educational agency, local educational agencies, county educational offices, higher education institutions, professional associations	State educational agency
COLORADO	Make in-depth studies in the early identification of drop-outs, plan action programs, and implement preventive programs	State educational agency	State educational agency, public secondary schools	State educational agency

Table 1 — Continued

STATE	TYPE OF ACTIVITY	SOURCE WHERE PROBLEM WAS IDENTIFIED	GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED	LOCATION OF CONTROL
GEORGIA	Develop a comprehensive educational program for all exceptional students	State educational agency	State educational agency, local educational agencies, and all major social agencies in the state	State educational agency
IOWA	A multi-state project to identify comprehensive planning procedures suitable for the specific states involved	State educational agencies	State educational agencies	State educational agencies (Utah SEA administering)
MICHIGAN	Comprehensive planning for vocational rehabilitation	State educational agency and U. S. Office of Education	State educational agency, private health organizations, state social service agencies, universities, and private foundations	State educational agency
MONTANA	Explore means for improving the teaching of courses in required mathematics	State educational agency	State educational agency, higher education institutions, secondary school personnel	State educational agency

Table 1 — Continued

STATE	TYPE OF ACTIVITY	SOURCE WHERE PROBLEM WAS IDENTIFIED	GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED	LOCATION OF CONTROL
NEW HAMPSHIRE	Pilot study of cost-benefit analysis	Legislative study committee	State educational agency, local educational agency, legislators	State educational agency and legislature
NORTH CAROLINA	Planning education for migrant farm children	Local educational agencies	State educational agency, local educational agencies, state social service departments, local health and welfare departments, migrant councils, council of churches, employment security commission	State educational agency
PENNSYLVANIA	Determine present and emerging education needs in the state, and identify existing resources	U. S. Office of Education, state educational agency, local educational agencies	Local educational agencies, state educational agency, higher education institutions, community agencies, non-public educational agencies, county educational agencies	State educational agency, local educational agencies
WISCONSIN	Determine method for assessing statewide educational achievement	State educational agency	State educational agency, educational test agency, special consultants	State educational agency

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